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U.S. SENTENCES 'TIGER' OF CUBA

Masferrer Gets Four Years for Plot

By THEODORE A. EDIGER

MIAMI, Fla. (AP) — Rolando Masferrer, the dreaded "Tiger" of pre-Castro Cuba, was sentenced to four years in prison Wednesday in connection with a priest's plot to overthrow Haiti's government with a ragtag volunteer army.

Five members of Masferrer's invasion force were given lesser sentences by U.S. District Judge Ted Cabot.

Defense attorneys said all six defendants would appeal.

The defendants—three Cuban exiles, two Haitian exiles and an American—were among 73 men in battle dress nabbed by U.S. agents at a Florida Keys hideout Jan. 2, 1967. The tiny army, witnesses said in a trial before Judge Cabot last November, was ready to shove off by boat to invade Haiti in order to establish a base to proceed against Fidel Castro.

Masferrer, a senator in pre-Castro Cuba, received three years on a charge of conspiring to invade Haiti and another year on a count of conspiring to export arms to Haiti.

FREE ON BOND

The 50-year-old exile, who had been free on $2,500 recognizance bond, was taken into custody with appeal bond set at $6,000.

Masferrer commanded a private army of some 1,500 persons during the regime of dictator Fulgencio Batista. The dreaded force, called "Los Tigres"—The Tigers—moved against pro-Castro elements. When Batista fell in 1959, Masferrer fled into exile.

Martin Casey, 29-year-old merchant seaman from Miami, was sentenced to nine months on each count with the sentences to run at the same time. Casey's appeal bond was set at $1,000.

The Rev. Jean Baptiste Georges, Roman Catholic priest and former Haitian Cabinet member who conceived the plot, received a 60-day jail term and suspended prison sentences of two years on each count. He was placed on three years probation. According to the alleged plot, Father Georges was to have been made Haitian president replacing Francois Duvalier.

Defense attorney Gino Negretti told the court: "All he did was try to free the Haitian people from one of the worst tyrannies in history."

NO QUESTION

Judge Cabot replied: "His sincerity is not in question, but this is the second time he has been charged with this crime." In 1964, charges against Father Georges were dismissed.

Cuban exiles Antonio Rojas and Julio Aton Constanzo and Haitian exile Rene Leon, a former Army colonel and the father of seven living in Elmhurst, N.Y., were given 60 day jail sentences, one year suspended prison sentences, and two years probation.

Negretti moved unsuccessfully for a directed verdict of acquittal despite the jury conviction. He argued that an Oct. 3, 1962, joint resolution of Congress expressing support for freeing of Cuba from Communism superseded the statutes under which the defendants were convicted.

Judge Cabot ruled the resolution was an expression of policy rather than a law.

The six defendants, sentenced one by one, stood silent as they heard their fate.

Ship Seizure Foiled By U.S., Cubans Say

MIAMI March 1 (UPI)—The leader of a militant Cuban exile group angrily blamed the United States today for thwarting an attempt by raiders to capture the Cuban freighter that rammed its own life boat off Virginia Tuesday.

Customs agents seized a smallboat containing four men yesterday off Government Cut near a Coast Guard station. They were jailed on probable charges of attempting to illegally export arms.

Dr. Orlando Bosch, secretary general of the Insurrectional Movement of Revolutionary Recovery (MIRR), said the men were on a mission to attack the freighter 26th of July as it passed the Florida coast and free three would-be defectors who had been in the rammed life boat.

Bosch said the four men in the 18-foot boat carried a 20 mm. gun, an automatic rifle and hand grenades, and were going to rendezvous with a 29-foot vessel carrying six men armed with "several 57 mm. cannons" and 50 caliber machine guns. When the smaller vessel didn't show up on time, Bosch said, the larger boat fled to escape possible capture by the Coast Guard.

(Havana Radio said yesterday the three "traitors" were taken from the sea alive and were being returned to Cuba to stand trial. Witnesses to the drama off the Virginia coast believed, however, the men drowned after the lifeboat was rammed by the freighter.)

Post 4/15/67

Bomb-Toting Cuban Exile Arrested

TIFTON, Ga., April 14 (UPI) —A Cuban exile was arrested with a bomb-filled suitcase today as he prepared to board a rented plane, apparently bound on a raid against Cuba.

Authorities identified him as Barbaro Balan Garcia, 34, of Miami. He was taken before U.S. Commissioner Eugene Greniger in Valdosta and charged with violating the U.S. Neutrality Act by trying to export war materials from the United States.

Another man, identified as Arthur Gerteit, 25, of Miami, was also arrested. He, authorities said, was to have flown the plane.

The arrests were made as two suitcases were being loaded on the plane. One suitcase contained dynamite and small aerial bombs and the other progaganda written in Spanish.

Garcia speaks no English, authorities said, and he was assigned an interpreter for the hearing before the U.S. commissioner.

7 Are Indicted In Haitian Invasion Plot

Post 2/28/67

MIAMI, Fla., Feb. 27 (AP)—A former Cuban senator, an exiled Haitian priest and five other men were indicated today on charges of conspiring to invade Haiti from the Florida Keys last month.

Six of the seven were among 75 battle-clad exiles and American adventurers rounded up Jan. 2 when customs agents barged into their camp on a secluded island near Marathon. A small arsenal was confiscated.

The indictments were returned by a Federal grand jury in Miami.

The maximum penalty is five years in prison and $10,000 fines.

The indictment said the seven conspired to set up a camp in southern Florida and to transport arms and ammunition to Miami from New York and Atlanta, Ga. The indictment said also they had planned to transport men and arms by boat for a military expedition against Haiti.

Named in the indictment are: Rolando Masferrer Rojas, 49, a Cuban citizen and former Cuban senator who now lives in Miami; Father Jean Baptiste Georges, 47, a Roman Catholic priest and former Minister of Education in Haiti, a Haitian citizen, living in Miami; Antonio Leon Rojas, 52, a Cuban, in Miami.

Also, Rene Juares Leon, 32, a Haitian citizen living at Elmhurst, N.Y.; Julio Aton Constanzo Palau, 30, a Cuban, Miami; Martin Francis Xavier Casey, 28, a U.S. citizen living in Miami; Mitchell Livingston Wer Bell 3d, 48, a U.S. citizen, living at Powder Springs, Ga.

Cuban, Bombs Seized in Georgia

YALDOSTA, Ga. (AP) — A roolying three in his organ- Cuban refugee, arrested at a Tifton Airport with bombs and propaganda leaflets, is being held in the Valdosta jail by a day, charged with unlawfully attempting to export war munitions.

He was arrested by U.S. customs agents yesterday shortly before takeoff in a small plane in which suitcases of incendiary and aerial bombs and leaflets were found, officials said.

Identified as Barbaro Balan Garcia of Miami, he was arraigned before U.S. Commissioner Eugene Greniger who set bond at $1,000, which was not posted.

GRENEKER, granting a request by Customs Agent W. B. Lankford, ruled that Garcia not be allowed to post his own bond.

"We feel the organization to which he belongs will come to his rescue," Lankford said. The government has was ar- ...

...ed as he prepared to board a rented plane, apparently bound on a raid against Cuba.

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Another man, identified as Arthur Gerteit, 25, of Miami, was also arrested. He, authorities said, was to have flown the plane.

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WITH GARCIA at Tifton was another man, Arthur Gerteit, 25, who an agent said had a pilot's license listing an address in Olympia, Pa., address. He was not arrested.

Ken Sharpe of Tifton Air Service Inc. said he flew with Gerteit on a routine check-out flight before papers were signed for the plane.

Agent Herbert Finstein testified that Garcia warned him not to open the suitcases after the arrest. "It's dangerous," the witness said Garcia as saying. "There are bombs in there."

LANKFORD SAID Garcia was arrested ... from Jackson-ville, Fla., were summoned to examine the two suitcases.

Authorities in Valdosta said the contents included four 10-pound aerial bombs, two five-pound incendiary bombs and propaganda leaflets in Spanish.

Introduced into evidence were maps of Cuba, one which agents said indicated a flight plan to Cuba, though the flight plan filed at Tifton was for a trip to Macon, Ga.

GARCIA, WHO speaks only Spanish, followed proceedings through an interpreter.

His court-appointed attorney, Omer Franklin Jr. of Valdosta, contended it would be suicide to try to fly the twin-engine Piper Commanche from Tifton to Cuba.

He said there was no evidence Garcia could pilot a plane and argued the government did not prove he owned the bombs.